

HUBER CIDER MILL EXPLOSION

Submitted by Nancy Maitland, Wellesley Township
Heritage and Historical Society



Wreck of Huber's Mill (Accession #2016-18-012; photo donated by Julie Schnurr of Linwood)

On September 10, 1908 Thomas Huber placed the following ad in the Wellesley Maple Leaf:

Notice

The undersigned will have his CIDER MILL in operation on or about the 15th September with the best improvements, when he will be prepared to manufacture Cider, Apple Butter and Apple Syrup on the shortest Notice.

Thos. Huber, 9th line, Wellesley, w.s.

A week later, the paper reported the explosion of the mill, the death of Huber and his business partner William Attig. What went wrong?

The Wellesley Maple Leaf of September 17, 1908 reported

... The work was about finished and on Monday forenoon the boiler was steamed up for the first time. Mr. Attig, the well-known contractor, was assisting in installing the plant, and both men were working in the blacksmith shop when the hired man came in and reported that the boiler was "blowing off" although the steam gauge only showed 25 pounds pressure. Mr. Attig replied that he would soon fix that and started for the boiler room accompanied by Mr. Huber. The hired man, thinking Attig intended to regulate the safety valve, remained in

the blacksmith shop, and to this he probably owes his life, for a moment later there was a terrific explosion.

The cider mill building was completely wrecked. Attig was found nearby, with one side of his face completely torn off, probably by a piece of flying iron, and his body otherwise mutilated. Huber had been thrown a long distance into the field and against an elm tree fully 320 feet away. Every article of clothing had been torn from his body. Both men must have died instantly."

Related articles appeared in Berlin's Daily Telegraph and the Waterloo Chronicle Telegraph.

Thomas Huber had lived at "Huber's Corner" all his life, his father having kept tavern, a blacksmith shop, and a wagon shop there.

Today, the site of the explosion has been memorialized by Linwood resident Leonard Horst. He obtained permission from the owner of the abandoned Braendle cider boiler in Heidelberg to move it near where the explosion occurred, on the south-west corner of Schummer Line and Lichty Road. The landowner graciously allowed him to use a corner of his field.

Mr. Horst would like to contact Huber and Attig family members to let them know how their ancestors have been honoured. If you have any information, please contact WTHHS member Debbie Kroetsch at 519-502-4673 or by email at info@wellesleyhistory.org and we will get the information to him.



Braendle cider boiler near the site of the explosion on September 15, 1908.